

**ADDENDUM
TO THE
SIOUX FALLS MPO AREA COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

2020 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

The Sioux Falls MPO Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) was adopted on November 8, 2018, and a progress report is required to be prepared annually. The purpose of the Coordinated Plan is to: 1) identify the unmet transportation needs for seniors and individuals with disabilities; and 2) develop strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.

Based on input from providers and stakeholders, the following strategies for seniors and individuals with disabilities were identified:

- ✓ Work to implement the strategies of the Sioux Falls Transit Development Plan that includes improvements and expansion of the fixed-route system.
- ✓ Develop travel training sessions as a major marketing effort that engages the community and help train new and potential riders.
- ✓ Help create State Regional Transit Systems to help provide options to outlying MPO communities to access transit services within the region.
- ✓ Reimagine a community-wide volunteer driver program that agencies can access as a volunteer driver resource.
- ✓ Keep paratransit services parallel to all fixed-route service levels and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of all fixed-route bus services.
- ✓ Develop an agency rate structure based on the full-cost allocation models to help off-set agency day trip costs on paratransit.
- ✓ Educate state and local policymakers about the specific benefits of human service transportation and public transit and how both play different roles in providing transportation to different rider needs.

2020 FTA Section 5310 Funding Recommendations

The Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC) met on March 4th and developed funding recommendations. The Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting on March 11th and March 12th, respectively, recommended approval of the TCC funding recommendations. The Urbanized Development Commission met on March 12th and approved the TCC Section 5310 funding recommendations outlined below.

1. The MPO recommends funding the Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center request at \$20,000 in 5310 funds with a 50% local match for operating funds. Avera's voucher system will assist a high-risk portion of persons with disabilities with current medical needs and financial subsidization needs to cover private transit providers such as Wheelchair Express. Avera's Strategy & Social Innovation department has nonfederal funds budgeted for transit-related projects.

Avera will assist paratransit qualified persons with medical appointments at facilities outside of the paratransit service area but within the Sioux Falls urbanized area. For any patients in need of temporary wheelchair transportation, an assessment would be completed by the patient's case manager and physical therapy/occupational therapy staff to ensure they qualify cognitively/physically and financially for the subsidized transportation.

How this project advances the Coordination of Human Service Transportation's goal:

Strategies:

- ✓ The City of Sioux Falls and private transportation providers should explore voucher service options when additional services are required beyond the Sioux Area Metro service area.

Contingency:

- ✓ If awarded 5310 funds for this project, Avera must submit a copy of all reports required by the State to SECOG.
- ✓ Avera's active participation in the coordinated efforts complementing the strategies identified and advancing the goals stated in the Coordinated Plan is strongly encouraged. Future funding may be contingent upon the agency's ongoing participation.

2. The MPO recommends funding the Community Coordinated Transportation Systems (CCTS) request at \$90,500 in 5310 funds with a 20% local match requirement for contracted service/capital funds and at \$87,000 in 5310 funds with a 20% local match requirement for capital funds. "River Cities Public Transit (dba CCTS in Sioux Falls) is committed to providing safe, reliable and courteous public transportation to the members of the communities it serves by promoting quality of life, livability, self-sufficiency and freedom through mobility." The contracted services funding will assist CCTS in providing services to DakotAbilities, LifeScape, and Pathways To Life for day program commute trips. The capital funding will enable CCTS to purchase an 18-passenger bus with 6 wheelchair positions to increase service flexibility and reliability for DakotAbilities, LifeScape, and Pathways To Life. It is projected that CCTS will provide up to 55,000 contracted service trips in 2021.

How this project advances the Coordination of Human Service Transportation's and Coordination of Paratransit Transportation's goals:

Strategies:

- ✓ Continue and expand a coordinated non-profit transportation system to help provide a safe, efficient, professional and specialized transportation option for human service agencies for non-ambulatory and ambulatory trips.
- ✓ Assist human service providers to provide the safest and most cost-effective transportation option possible based on the needs of the agency.
- ✓ Continue to identify opportunities to move agency day trips to CCTS.

Contingency:

- ✓ If awarded 5310 funds for this project, CCTS must submit a copy of all reports required by the State to SECOG.
 - ✓ A vehicle purchased with these funds must be utilized to provide transportation services for persons with disabilities in the Sioux Falls urbanized area.
 - ✓ Efforts to foster a more efficient non-profit community transportation system are a top priority in the Sioux Falls MPO's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). As a major non-profit transportation provider in the Sioux Falls community, the agency's active participation in the coordinated efforts complementing the strategies identified and advancing the goals stated in the Coordinated Plan is strongly encouraged. Future funding may be contingent upon the agency's ongoing participation.
3. The MPO recommends no funding for the Glory House. The Glory House requested \$16,200 in 5310 funds for operating costs. The Glory House is a halfway house providing substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, and case management for clients of the justice system. Its primary mission is "Helping People Claim their Lives with Christian Compassion, Resources and Support." The no funding recommendation was based on higher priority needs competing for the limited Section 5310 funding and the Glory House's clients' ability to utilize Sioux Area Metro's fixed-route service for a significant portion of their transportation needs. Sioux Area Metro will work with the Glory House to see if Sioux Area Metro fix-route services can provide for the needed transportation services or if other transportation alternatives can be pursued. The Sioux Falls MPO and the Transportation Coordination Committee will work with the Glory House to ensure that its clients' needs that fall within the scope of the Coordinated Plan are identified, quantified, and considered for funding in future Section 5310 funding rounds.
 4. The MPO recommends funding the LifeScape request at \$58,550 in 5310 funds with a 20% local match requirement for capital funds. "LifeScape's mission is to empower children and adults with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives." This funding will assist LifeScape with the purchase of a 12-passenger bus with 5 wheelchair positions.

How this project advances the Coordination of Human Service Transportation's goal:

Strategies:

- ✓ Continue and expand a coordinated non-profit transportation system to help provide a safe, efficient, professional and specialized transportation option for human service agencies for non-ambulatory and ambulatory trips.
- ✓ Assist human service providers to provide the safest and most cost-effective transportation option possible based on the needs of the agency.
- ✓ Assist human service providers to secure funding when the agency is required to utilize their own transportation services.
- ✓ Coordinate with human service agencies with options to integrate their clients into the community with the most appropriate transportation option possible.

In addition, LifeScape has been actively involved in the coordinated planning process through its participation on the Transportation Coordination Committee, Public Transit Advisory Board, and Sioux Falls City Council Transit Task Force and with its participation in Coordinated Plan stakeholder meetings. It has also been a partner in the CCTS project.

Contingencies:

- ✓ If awarded 5310 funds for this project, LifeScape must submit a copy of all reports required by the State to SECOG.
 - ✓ A vehicle purchased with these funds must be utilized to provide transportation services for persons with disabilities in the Sioux Falls urbanized area.
 - ✓ Efforts to foster a more efficient non-profit community transportation system are a top priority in the Sioux Falls MPO's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). As a major non-profit in the Sioux Falls community that provides transportation to its clients, the agency's active participation in the coordinated efforts complementing the strategies identified and advancing the goals stated in the Coordinated Plan is strongly encouraged. Future funding may be contingent upon the agency's ongoing participation.
5. The MPO recommends no funding for Teachwell Solutions. Teachwell Solutions requested \$20,000 in 5310 funds for capital funds for the purchase of a used 12-passenger van. Teachwell Solutions is the name adopted by the East Dakota Educational Cooperative. The cooperative is a school district cooperative organized under SDCL 13-5-32.1 and therefore, a public entity. The South Dakota Management Plan requires that to be eligible for Section 5310 funding public entities must be approved by SDDOT to coordinate transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities or provide a certification to the Governor that no nonprofit organizations are readily available to provide transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The no funding recommendation was based on the eligibility of the organization to receive 5310 funds, the ability to follow federal procurement requirements, and the higher priority needs competing for the limited Section 5310 funding. The Sioux Falls MPO has requested

that SDDOT provide information about the processes by which the SDDOT approval is requested or the certification to Governor is made. The MPO will inform Teachwell Solutions about the eligibility question so they can make an informed decision about applying in the future.

2020 Activities to Implement Coordinated Plan Strategies

Transit Core Team process and anticipated transit pilot project

To address unmet needs of the Sioux Area Metro (SAM) transit system, Mayor Paul TenHaken created the Transit Core Team, a group of 14 City of Sioux Falls employees from across nine divisions. Together they are using human-centered design to find innovative transit solutions by working closely with the public and community. Their goal: Increase the economic benefit of public transit for residents and the City.

In an effort to approach public transportation from a new perspective, the Transit Core Team utilizes human-centered design. Human-centered design is exactly like it sounds – thinking about people first. Through the human-centered design process, the Transit Core Team has worked closely alongside the residents most closely impacted by the transit system, including bus riders, employers, and nonprofits.

After generating more than 50 ideas on how to improve public transit, the Transit Core Team identified the idea they believe could make the biggest economic impact for riders and for the city: shift fixed route service to a pooled on-demand service using our existing bus fleet. A pilot of this bus service will begin in the Fall of 2020 by trying the service on Saturdays. Results of the pilot will determine if and when the service is expanded to other times and areas of the SAM system. It is hoped that this on-demand system will provide another option for elderly and people of disabilities.

The final recommendations of the Core Team included other initiatives that will be able to help create innovations and efficiencies in the transit system. Those recommendations include:

- Real-Time GPS Tracking (2020 / 2021)
- Wifi on Buses and at the Transit Depot
- Mobile ticketing
- Enhance data collection and analysis of the transit system
- Autonomous vehicle pilot project
- Public/private partnerships, including Guaranteed Ride Home program
- Incentive programs to recruit new riders
- Consolidate all non-public transportation services into one non-profit organization
- Eliminate fares by increasing sponsorships and advertising
- Electric Buses

The full Transit Core Team report (**Building Innovation Capacity: Impacts of an Innovation Team Approach**) is available for review at <https://www.siouxfalls.org/mayor/boards-commissions/public-transit-advisory-bd>

COVID-19 Mitigation Activities

Of course, throughout much of 2020, public transit and human services coordination activities were focused on the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19. Public transit has enforced the following social distancing guidelines on SAM fixed-route and paratransit buses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Riders should maintain as much distance as possible between other riders and the driver.
- All drivers are wearing masks while driving, and we strongly encourage riders to do the same. Masks are available on all buses and will be provided to all passengers.
- If you are feeling ill, please do not ride the bus and stay at home.

Sioux Area Metro continues to enhance cleaning methods to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Expanded routine cleaning of commonly/frequently touched surfaces such as handrails, handles, seats, operating controls, and knobs.
- Each bus is equipped with a commercial disinfectant deodorant that sanitizes fabric and leather and kills several pandemic viruses. Drivers use the disinfectant as needed.
- SAM employees have been advised to wash their hands as frequently as possible.
- Thoroughly cleaning of buses when they return to the garage as often as possible with current available staff.

Human service agencies closed many of their programs during the spring of 2020. Some agencies opened programs back up during the summer and fall of 2020. Human services transportation was significantly down due to this situation but was important to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and maintain the health of clients.